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WITCHCRAFT AND MAGIC IN THE ELIZABETHAN DRAMA.¹

BY H. W. HERRINGTON.

THE most interesting period of English witchcraft falls in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These are pre-eminently the centuries of the great documentary war over the dogma; of eager discussion in pulpit, in council, and on the street; of fevered outbreaks of prosecution; of the great trials. Naturally a subject of such universal interest is abundantly represented in literature, and nowhere is it revealed more fully than in that most typical of the literary forms in this period, the Elizabethan drama. The outstanding witchcraft plays of the period are well known, and have attracted the most earnest attention from historians, literary critics, and students of folk-lore. The most famous specimens are Shakespeare's "Macbeth;" Middleton's "Witch;" Jonson's "Masque of Queens" and "Sad Shepherd;" Dekker, Ford, and Rowley's "Witch of Edmonton;" Heywood and Brome's "Late Lancashire Witches;" and Shadwell's "Lancashire Witches." In each of these, witchcraft enters as a leading motive. As a group, they fall relatively late in the Elizabethan period (Shadwell's, indeed, belonging to the Restoration drama). The earliest of them, "Macbeth," is usually dated about 1605 or 1606. Yet no one will assert that the witchcraft creed was not vehemently, even passionately, believed in the earlier years of Elizabeth's reign; while, if epidemics of witch persecution be taken as evidence, it will be recalled that some of the most famous of all English witch trials took place before 1600.² Why the late appearance of witchcraft as an important dramatic motive? Does this delay throw any light on

¹ The following material is re-arranged and condensed from a thesis presented in 1916 to the Division of Modern Languages of Harvard University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The writer is profoundly indebted throughout to Professor George Lyman Kittredge of Harvard University. Professor Kittredge, at the outset of the investigation, generously placed at the writer's disposal his own extensive notes on the same topics; and on these the writer has freely drawn. It is impossible adequately to acknowledge the aid thus extended, and even more so the sustained helpfulness of his suggestions, advice, and encouragement.

² For a mention of some of the most famous, see below, pp. 469, 470.

the state of the public mind in regard to witchcraft? Or do the public attitude on these questions, the controversies concerning them, and the celebrated "epidemics," explain the appearance of the plays? Or is the solution of the problem to be found in causes purely literary; in, for instance, the history of the vogue of dramatic forms? These and similar questions the writer proposes to examine.

Plays on related themes show a somewhat different chronology. Thus the most famous Elizabethan play of magic, Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus," appeared perhaps as early as 1589; while plays with fairy elements were already well developed in the days of John Lyly, early in the 1580's. Convincing conclusions on the problems above stated can hardly be reached without some survey of most of the important plays which employ either human beings who operate with spirits, or the spirits themselves.¹ The rapid analysis to follow will accordingly cover the employment in the Elizabethan drama of fairies, magicians, devils, conjurers, wise women, witches, and similar figures.

I.

The fairy plays may be first disposed of. For the extensive and continued use of fairy actors, reasons purely literary may readily be established. Fairy mythology in England is ancient, far antedating the accession of Elizabeth, and in its development no sudden or unusual incidents (so far as the lore of the folk is concerned) can be discovered. John Lyly, the first important English dramatist to employ the fairies, demonstrably uses them as a theatric device. In his "Gallathea" (1584 or earlier) ² one Raffe, a clown, rather out of sorts at his ill success in seeking his fortune, finds himself in the woods alone. As he soliloquizes, he notices the appearance of some strange figures. Then the stage-direction reads, "Enter Fayries dauncing & playing, & so, Exeunt."³ These fairies have no influence on Raffe or any one else; they serve to exhibit no mythology; they are not heard of in this play again. They are accordingly an admirable example of a totally inorganic fairy ballet, brought on solely as a lyric *divertissement*. The choir-boys who were Lyly's performers ⁴ made admirable stage fairies, who might very prettily dance in a ring; and the Elizabethan playwright or producer, knowing the insatiable craving for the lyric on the part of his audiences, would have been dull of wit if he had failed

¹ Not including ghosts. The problems concerning them seem quite distinct from those of the groups here proposed for examination.

² R. W. Bond dates between 1582 and 1585, probably 1584 (The Complete Works of John Lyly, 2: 424-427). A. Feuillerat dates 1584 (John Lyly, 136, 139, 140, 575).

³ II. iii. 1-8 (Bond's Lyly, vol. 2).

⁴ The title-pages of all of Lyly's plays except The Woman in the Moon state that they were acted by "Her Majesty's Children" or (more frequently) by "the Children of Paul's" (see title-pages in Bond's Lyly, vols. 2, 3).

to avail himself of fairy antics. Add but a song from the boys' clear, well-trained throats, and the success of his scene was assured. In "Endimion" (1585?)¹ they do sing a song, while their irruption upon the scene and subsequent dance is almost as pointless as in "Galathea." In Robert Greene's well-known romantic comedy, "James IV" (entered 1594),² occur fairy ballets in great profusion, some seven or eight of them.³ In this drama, however, Oberon and his crew play a part of considerable importance, performing an elaborate chorus function throughout. Yet even here they stand apart in an enveloping action which is quite distinct from the plot of the play. The pseudo-fairy scene in the last act of "The Merry Wives of Windsor," where the pretended fairies congregate at Herne's oak, and dance in circle about Falstaff, is clearly introduced by Shakespeare to round off the play with a lyric scene. Its tone is quite different from the robust humor of the rest of the play, — from the boisterous practical jokes of the buck-basket and the fat woman of Brainford.

A more curious use of the fairies for song and dance occurs in the turbulent and bloody play, "Lust's Dominion" (c. 1590?).⁴ Enters Oberon, with "fairies dancing before him, and music with them," in the midst of a scene of the heaviest emotion, — lust, revenge, and impending ruthless murder; Oberon⁵ delivers a warning, too late; off go the fairies "dancing and singing;" and immediately the bloody deed is done.⁶ The incongruity of this lyric interlude (as "relief" it is in questionable taste) demonstrates forcibly the subserviency of the playwright and stage-manager to the demand of the pit for spectacle, for music, and for the evolutions of the dance.

Thus the fairy as a stage figure was well known by the beginning of that marvellous decade the 1590's. Some of the fairy mythology had already been exploited, particularly that connected with the imported figure Oberon, doubtless a borrowing from the French

¹ iv. iii. 25 sqq. See Bond (3: 10-13) for the date of composition. Both Bond and Feuillerat (John Lyly, 576, 577) place Feb. 2, 1586, as the "Candlemas Day" on which, according to the title-page of the 1591 quarto, the play was performed at court.

² Ent. Sta. Reg. May 14, 1594; pub. 1598.

³ In *Plays and Poems of Robert Greene* (ed. J. Churton Collins), vol. 2, stage dir. for Prol., Introd. to act. III, after acts I, III, and IV, and at ll. 90, 674, 675, 1631.

⁴ In *Works of Christopher Marlowe* (1826), vol. 3. Pub. in 1657 as Marlowe's, but certainly not his. The play belongs in the period with *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Titus Andronicus*, and other bloody plays; c. 1590 is a good guess.

⁵ Oberon here appears in his familiar character as a friendly presiding genius. He exhibits this character in the romance *Huon of Bordeaux*, — an early French work translated into English by 1534, and thus readily accessible to the Elizabethan dramatists (ed. Sir Sidney Lee, E. E. T. S., 1882-87). His function is similar in Greene's *James IV*. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* he endeavors to straighten the tangled affairs of the Athenian lovers, blesses the bed and offspring of Theseus and the rest.

⁶ See act III. sc. ii (pp. 251 ff.).

through the romance "Huon of Bordeaux,"¹ — a literary, not a popular source. We need not search, therefore, for any special stimulus which urged Shakespeare more fully to display the fairy-lore in "A Midsummer Night's Dream." He took up the established dramatic vogue of the fairy, and directed it into new channels, gathering in figures, traditions, beliefs, — new to the drama, but old in popular story, — which were doubtless familiar to him from infancy; refining, too, as he went along, transforming the "lubber fiend" of folk-legend² into a light and delicate Robin Goodfellow, ready to put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes. The lyric tradition which had come down through the earlier dramatists he likewise perfects, and at last makes thoroughly organic. "A Midsummer Night's Dream" abounds in fairy rounds and fairy songs;³ but they are of the very essence of the play, integral to construction and atmosphere. How deeply the fairy material had impressed the poet's imagination is seen from his use of it in Mercutio's famous speech in "Romeo and Juliet,"⁴ — lines which were certainly composed prior to the full development of these themes in "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

By this time the fairies had entered upon an enduring vogue. A long line of plays that utilize them need little more than an enumeration. "The King of Fairies" as a stage character is mentioned by Greene in 1592.⁵ "Huon of Bordeaux," which must have made much use of our old friend Oberon, was performed by Henslowe's company in 1593.⁶ "The Wisdom of Doctor Dodypoll" (c. 1596?)⁷ presents a group of

¹ See footnote 5, p. 449.

² As presented in the familiar lines of Milton's *L'Allegro*, the "drudging goblin," "The lubber fiend," who, "stretched out all the chimney's length, Basks at the fire his hairy strength;" as seen also in the pamphlet *Robin Goodfellow, his Mad Pranks and Merry Jests*, printed in 1628, illustrated with a woodcut of Robin, in which he has a dwarf's stature, a beard, hairy body and loins, goats' legs and feet, and horns. Just how Puck was represented on the stage under Shakespeare's direction it is impossible to say; at the present time he is made first cousin, in his slightness, daintiness, sprightliness, and beauty, to Prospero's Ariel. Certainly the lines of the play show that swift motion is characteristic of him, and poetry — of a kind peculiarly ethereal and delicate — is everywhere his. One of the fairies, to be sure, calls him "thou lob of spirits," and this may mean much the same thing as Milton's "lubber fiend." Yet the lines of the play and the acting tradition do not bear out the epithet. Shakespeare's conception is now *the* Robin Goodfellow for most people.

³ See II. i. 140, 141; II. ii. 1-26; V. i. 360-429; and songs throughout the play. The "bergomask" by Bottom's crew (V. i. 359) is a parody on the fairies' graceful dancing, like the grotesque revels of an anti-masque.

⁴ I. iv. 50-102.

⁵ *Groatsworth of Wit* (in Huth Lib. ed., *Life and Complete Works of Robert Greene* [ed. A. B. Grosart], 12 : 131).

⁶ *Henslowe's Diary* (ed. W. W. Greg), p. 16. Spelled characteristically by Henslowe "hewen of burdokes," — a commentary on the pronunciation of the name.

⁷ A. H. Bullen, *Old English Plays*, 3 : 130-137 (see act III, sc. iii, v).

fairies, here inconsistently under the control of an enchanter, who, to the accompaniment of music, bring in a banquet.¹ The anonymous "Wily Beguiled" (before 1595)² trades on the popular interest, using the name of Robin Goodfellow for a character who resembles little either Shakespeare's creation or the popular figure. A fairy ballet is a prominent feature in "The Maid's Metamorphosis" (1599),³ formerly attributed to Lyly. Early in the new century W. Percy wrote "The Fairy Pastoral."⁴

The masque as it was developed at court readily admitted the fairies into its *dramatis personæ*. They suited well this decorative and spectacular form of entertainment: the graceful young people of the court proved suitable actors, as the choir-boys had earlier done; and the dance motive, now long established as the dramatic function of the fairies, favored their inclusion in the masque, the origin and very centre of which was a dance. Jonson's "Masque of Oberon" (1611), "Love Restored" (1612), and "Gipsies Metamorphosed" (1621),⁵ all make some use of fairy material. His charming royal entertainment, "The Satyr" (1603),⁶ gives prominent parts to Queen Mab and her bevy of fairies. Puck Hairry, in his unfinished pastoral "The Sad Shepherd," is his original version of Puck or Robin Goodfellow.⁷ The burlesque scene of the fraudulent "Queen of Fairy" in his "Alchemist" (1610) should not be overlooked.⁸ Jonson may thus be regarded as the most conspicuous user of the fairy theme in the later period.

A scene similar to the one in Jonson's "Alchemist" occurs in "The

¹ Of course these should properly be an enchanter's spirits, not fairies. The "magic repast" is one of the commonest pieces of "business" connected with the stage-magician. At once one recalls the banquet brought on by the "shapes" in *The Tempest* (III. iii). Friar Bacon, in Greene's drama, after a bit of comedy in offering the King and Emperor his mess of pottage, promises a splendid banquet, in mouth-watery language, for their royal and imperial stomachs (III. ii. 1337-1358, in Churton Collins's ed.). Such a banquet, if it is not conjured on, is at any rate conjured off when Faustus snatches away dish and cup from which the Holy Father is about to eat and quaff. So universally expected is the device of a magic repast where spirits are operating, that Slightall, in *A New Trick to Cheat the Devil* (see below, p. 464), readily accepts one which is part of the elaborate deception practised upon him.

² Dodsley's *Old Plays* (ed. W. C. Hazlitt), vol. 9 (pub. 1606).

³ See R. W. Bond, *Complete Works of John Lyly*, 3 : 359-361 (II. ii, 52-116).

⁴ Pr. 1824 for the Roxburghe Club from a MS. in library of Joseph Haslewood. A letter from Oberon, occurring in the play, is dated 1647; but the play appears to have been a revision, in old age, of a work of the author's youth, and may date not far from the same writer's *Cuck-Queans and Cuckolds Errant* (1601). (See Preface to Roxburghe Club ed.)

⁵ Col. F. Cunningham and W. Gifford, *Works of Ben Jonson*, vol. 7.

⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 6.

⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 6. On date of *The Sad Shepherd*, see below, p. 482, footnote 10.

⁸ III. v.

Valiant Welshman," by "R. A." (before 1615).¹ Several lost plays then attest the continued popularity of the motive.² About 1620 there was produced "The Fairy Masque."³ In 1624 was licensed "The Fairy Knight," by Dekker and Ford.⁴ Probably some time in the Elizabethan period belongs "The Fairy Queen" of Warburton's list,⁵ although this play may have been based on Spenser's romance. Thus well along through the Elizabethan period the fairies continued to be popular on the stage, particularly in masques and similar entertainments, to which they lend themselves unusually well. As handled by Jonson, they become a decorative feature even more than before. The attitude assumed toward them was not unlike that toward the "fairy" to-day. They had, in other words, become a pure convention. Any serious treatment was hardly possible after Thomas Randolph's delightful parody and gentle burlesque in his "Amyntas" (before 1635). Randolph, remarks Mr. Schelling, laughed the fairies off the stage.⁶

The long history of the Elizabethan stage fairy⁷ is a striking example of the persistence of a dramatic type. No historical events, no popular fever, are needed to explain his enduring popularity. The character of the material renders it, at least in part, independent of shifts in the vogue of dramatic forms, since nearly any kind of play, to the liberal tastes of the Elizabethan, might have a lyric interlude. Yet it is interesting to note that about the turn of the century, so far as we can judge from the extant material, the fairies were vanishing from the general drama, to find a safe harborage in the court masque. Perhaps this was because the Elizabethan had lost what faith he formerly held in the fairy-folk, and only a form which conventionally used dead mythology might continue to present this material.⁸ Surer reasons can be shown, however, in a decided shift in dramatic values which took place just before 1600, and which after that date would have rendered the fanciful fairy material unacceptable to the general.

¹ Ed. Dr. Valentin Krebs, *Münchener Beiträge*, vol. 23, 1902 (II. i, and II. v); also in *Tudor Facsimile Texts*.

² R. P. Collier forged in Henslowe's Diary the title "Robin Goodfellow" to a play for which Henslowe made payments to Henry Chettle in 1602 (see Henslowe's Diary, ed. W. W. Greg, xlv).

³ See Halliwell, *Dict. of Old Eng. Plays*, 91.

⁴ See J. Q. Adams, *The Dramatic Records of Sir Henry Herbert*, 29.

⁵ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 85 (pt. 2): 221 (September, 1815).

⁶ See F. E. Schelling, *Elizabethan Drama*, I: 396 (pr. in *Works of Thos. Randolph*, ed. W. C. Hazlitt).

⁷ Surely much longer than here set down, when we reckon plays lost. Many Elizabethan plays, masques, and entertainments also contain figures of similar appearance and functions, variously called satyrs, sylvans, fauns, etc.

⁸ Classic mythology is the stock source for the masques. The great majority of them use classical story.

A full exposition of this point must wait until the evidence from other sources has been gathered in.

II.

Oberon, Robin Goodfellow, Queen Mab, and all their crew, formed for the Elizabethans a real mythology, received with wavering degrees of faith, with scepticism, with an amused tolerance, or with a purely poetical acceptance. The magician, on the other hand, was an actual figure in contemporary life, pointed at, resorted to. Especially well known were various less pretentious dealers in magic, — conjurers, exorcisers, and the like. Yet one type of magician, clearly to be distinguished in the drama, still seemed remote and unsubstantial. This was the mediæval enchanter, best represented by the Arthurian Merlin. His powers are typically almost illimitable, and are wielded, in contradistinction to those of the later magicians, with inconceivable ease, with no laborious poring over ponderous books, no sweating over artfully contrived spells, no pledging of the magician's soul to the fiend. Frequently his eyes see the future as clearly as the past. He may be of devil birth. Now, this figure, originating in the folk-tale, was developed into the familiar enchanter of the mediæval romances, and survived in them, and because of their influence, long after his analogues in contemporary life had become quite different personages. We may accordingly expect to find him in plays which derive from the romances.

Plays of the romance type were most popular in the 1570's and 1580's. In those decades flourished a dramatic form which, after Mr. Schelling, may be defined as the "heroical romance," "the romance of old mediæval tales," or "the romance of heroic exploit and interminable adventure." Wild and flamboyant these plays are, like the romances on which they are based; filled with impossible characters, extraordinary adventures, sudden and violent shifts of scene. The best-known example of the type is "Common Conditions" (c. 1570?).¹ Particularly at court was this type of play popular, as many titles in the Revels' accounts bear witness.² The finding of a play, otherwise characteristic of this *genre*, which turns mainly on magic, has *a priori* no special significance. The author was merely using a romance story, in which it so happened that enchantment was the centre of the plot. The most typical extant romance play which contains magic

¹ Recent ed. by Tucker Brooke, Elizabethan Club Reprints (New Haven, 1915). An older ed. is by Brandl in *Quellen u. Forschungen*, vol. 80 (1898).

² For example, *Herpetulus the Blewnknight and Perobia*; *The Red Knight*; *The Solitary Knight*; *The Knight in the Burning Rock*; *Paris and Vienna*; *Cloridon and Radiamanta*; *Predor and Lucia*; *Phredastus and Phigon and Lucia*, *Titus and Gisippus*; *Philemon and Philecia*; *Serpedon*; *Ariodante and Genevora*; *Felix and Philemona*; *The Irish Knight*. Most of these are mentioned in Schelling's *Elizabethan Drama*, I: 198, 199.

is "Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes," of undetermined authorship,¹ assignable to the 1570's or at latest the early 80's. The outlandish adventures in this drama are those of the "heroical romance." There are two irreproachable knights, with correspondent ladies fair for whom they engage in frequent combat. The scene shifts with great speed all the way from Denmark to the court of Alexander of Macedon. The magician is Sir Bryan Sans Foy,² who keeps the "forest of strange marvels," in which prowls the Flying Serpent.³ Over knights who essay this adventure in order to win the Princess Juliana of Denmark, he casts a magic sleep, and he keeps them herded as prisoners in his castle. When Clamydes actually kills the fearsome beast, Sir Bryan robs the brave knight of his dress and shield, and, lugging along the serpent's head, arrives in Denmark to claim the lady as his own. Of course he is at length discovered and discredited. The dragon-slaying incident, and the identification by means of the severed head, link this story to one of the most widely spread of all folk-motives, the legend of Perseus.⁴

Unlike "Sir Clyomon" and similar dramas, which spring merely from the vogue of the romance play, some plays of magic with Arthurian subject-matter belong rather to the general type of chronicle history. Arthur as the great British king, a veritable monarch, ruling a real and not a shadowy Britain, had been duly set forth by the early chroniclers; and no less real did they deem his sire, Uther Pendragon, the warlock Merlin, the Saxon invaders Hengist and Horsa,

¹ Dyce, Peele. G. L. Kittredge, Preston, the author of *Cambyases* (*Journal of Germanic Philology*, 2 : 8). Tucker Brooke seems to dissent (*Common Conditions*, 1915, p. 84). Printed conveniently in *Works of George Peele* (ed. A. H. Bullen), vol. 2.

² Compare the Saracen Sans Foy in *Spenser's Fairie Queen*.

³ This pitiless monster is evidently modelled on the classical Minotaur, to whom, in fact, he is compared (sc. i, l. 101), since he is represented as fetching daily to himself a lady "to feed his hungry paunch withal." It is to save the "coasts adjacent" from the fearful ravage due to his delicate appetite that Juliana modestly offers herself as prize to its conqueror (sc. i, ll. 45-54). Another form of the classical story is used in Lyly's *Gallathea*, mentioned above for its fairy material.

⁴ As studied by E. S. Hartland, *The Legend of Perseus*. The naïve identification of the slayer—identification accepted as absolute by those concerned—by means of the head of the slain dragon is a motive of the folk-tale. In characteristic forms of the story the villain takes on himself the credit for the great feat by producing the head or the like. The hero, however, has usually retained some private token which ultimately establishes his claim; as, say, the tongues of the beast. — The play of *Sir Clyomon* is connected, in a way, with the Alexander cycle of romances, since part of the action takes place at that monarch's court. A play showing a firmer relation to the Charlemagne cycle is *The Distracted Emperor*, as A. H. Bullen called it when he reprinted it from manuscript (*Old English Plays*, vol. 3); or *Charlemagne*, as Fleay and others have dubbed it. This deals with certain practices of the treacherous Ganelon. The chief magic item is a charmed ring which has the power of drawing upon its possessor a senile, doting admiration from the aged emperor, Charlemagne. The play may be Chapman's (see Bullen, *loc. cit.*, 161, 162; and T. M. Parrott, *Mod. Phil.*, 13: No. 5, September, 1915).

and other figures who, in the standard accounts, play rôles in the various preludes to the tales of the Table Round. First appearing in the composite chronicle of Nennius, these stories passed through a line of chroniclers, ever with changes, ever with the inclusion of new material, to the popular twelfth-century Geoffrey of Monmouth, where they are set down *in extenso* as a sober account of British origins.¹ They appear as well, though in somewhat more critical form, in Holinshed and other late chroniclers.

These tales, then, the playwrights discovered as records of the national past when, in the great rush of patriotic feeling that accompanied and followed the contest with Spain, they searched for suitable historical material to place upon the stage, back through the accounts of reign after reign to the very beginnings of history in the British Isles.² The period of the chronicle plays was from the latter part of the 1580's, through the 1590's, and then, with waning popularity, until a few years after the death of Elizabeth. In this period, and definitely referable to the vogue of the chronicle histories, occur certain plays based on Arthurian story, but without magic.

There is, for instance, the entertainment known as "The Misfortunes of Arthur" (presented before her Majesty by the gentlemen of Gray's Inn on Feb. 28, 1587),³ which sets forth soberly enough, in the style of the chronicle history, the story of Mordred's treason. Middleton's "Mayor of Queenborough" ⁴ similarly employs reputed "history" for its main plot, treating of the overcoming, through craft and guile, of the weak and dissolute British monarch Vortigern by the Saxon invaders Hengist and Horsa.

William Rowley's "Birth of Merlin" ⁵ is the conspicuous example of

¹ See R. H. Fletcher, "The Arthurian Material in the Chronicles" (Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature, vol. 10), for a careful survey of this material in the early chronicles.

² "There is record, within the [Elizabethan] period, of upwards of two hundred and twenty titles of plays dealing with subjects drawn from English history, biography, and legend. . . . From 1588 to a year or two after the close of the reign [of Elizabeth], the period of their popularity, they must have constituted more than a fifth of all contemporary plays. . . . From Edward the Confessor to Queen Elizabeth and apparently to King James himself, no English monarch remains unrepresented in this comprehensive historical drama." — SCHELLING, *Elizabethan Drama*, I : 251, 252.

³ Ed. Harvey C. Grumbine in *Litterarhistorische Forschungen* (Berlin, 1900), vol. 14.

⁴ Pub. 1661. Written perhaps (or revised) early in the seventeenth century (see Schelling, I : 510, and below, p. 456). Printed in *Works of Thomas Middleton* (ed. A. H. Bullen), vol. 2.

⁵ Ed. Karl Warnke and Ludwig Proescholdt, *Pseudo-Shakespearian Plays* (Halle, 1887), and by C. F. Tucker Brooke in *The Shakespeare Apocrypha*. Pub. 1662 as "by William Shakespear, and William Rowley." No one has seriously considered Shakespeare as even in part responsible, although various collaborators with Rowley have been proposed; e.g., Middleton, or Dekker, or others. See F. A. Howe in *Mod. Phil.*, 4 : 193-205; F. W. Moorman in *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, 5 : 279-281; and references cited by Brooke in *Shakespeare Apocrypha*, xlvii. Composed doubtless some time during the reign of James I.

a play on Arthurian story which contains magic. Utherpendragon is the hero; but he does not here act his most famous part, — that of the lover of Igrayne, and the begetter of Arthur. Instead he is presented as patriot and warrior, by his valor becoming the savior of his land. Meantime Merlin, who is of devil parentage, mature at birth, plays various tricks by his art, confutes false magicians, and in floridly oracular style interprets portents as signifying the glory of the Britons under Arthur, and their final fall before the Saxons.

This play, like "The Mayor of Queenborough," is known to us only in a relatively late Elizabethan form. There was, however, a vogue of plays on the Hengist-Vortigern-Uther material in 1596–97, as the diary of Philip Henslowe shows; and perhaps the plays which enjoyed considerable popularity in those years under the titles "Valteger" (a variant spelling of "Vortigern") and "Utherpendragon"¹ were earlier forms of those now credited to Middleton and William Rowley. In any event, they were in all likelihood not widely different in type; and we may accordingly assume that the romantic possibilities of Merlin as the mysterious "enchanter of romance" were not in Elizabethan times utilized, but that he remained as indispensable court magician to Uther and other supposedly historical personages. Contemporary interest in magic does not affect him, except as it magnifies the number of his tricks. To the Elizabethans and their successors he was known, as a matter of fact, chiefly as prophet and seer.²

¹ Henslowe's Diary (ed. W. W. Greg), 50–53. The "henges" played on June 22, 1597 (not a "ne" [new] play) was probably a revival or altered version of Valteger, since the crafty Saxon invader had much to do with the weak British monarch. Vortigern appears to have been revived, with changes, in 1601 (*Ibid.*, 151).

² Wm. E. Mead, in *Outlines of the Hist. of the Legend of Merlin* (pt. 4 of the prose Merlin, pub. E. E. T. S., 1899), collects material bearing on this point. Various prophecies attributed to Merlin occur in English verse of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. (Mead, lxxi). See Lear, III. ii. 95: "This prophecy Merlin shall make." In 1641 appeared in London *The Life of Merlin, surnamed Ambrosius, his Prophesies and Predictions interpreted; and their Truth made good by our English Annals*, by Thos. Heywood (Mead, lxxvi). In the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a considerable number of general prophecies and almanac predictions were fathered upon the national prophet. William Lilly (1602–82) published, under the name "Merlinus Anglicus," *Englands Propheticall Merline*.

The oracular, floridly rhetorical forecasting of events in British history, in the version passed down as Merlin's utterance (to be found in Geoffrey of Monmouth's History, and also in a separate document earlier written by him) under a veiled allegory of lions, dragons, wolves, eagles, and various other beasts, evoked earnest belief, and was cited more than once to sway credulous minds.

Owen Glendower, in 1 Henry IV, believed in Merlin. The sceptical Hotspur was of another mind; Owen angered him, he says, —

"With telling me of the moldwarp and the ant,
Of the dreamer Merlin and his prophecies,

Merlin's proper type — the mediæval enchanter — was never popular on the stage. The enchanter in Milton's "Comus" is a poetic survival. The Sacrapant of Peele's "Old Wives Tale" is rather of his type; but Peele is transcribing folk-lore, not romance.

Peele's play and Dekker's "Old Fortunatus" are the two best examples of plays on folk-motives, — a *genre* which bears a close relation to the magic of romance, since such magic is an elaboration of material borrowed from the folk. Yet the manner of the true folk-play, like Peele's, is very different from the "heroical romance." In "The Old Wives Tale" the presentation is childlike; the text retains the tricks of phrase of the folk-tale;¹ the whole manner has the

And of a dragon and a finless fish,
A clip-wing'd griffin and a moulten raven,
A couching lion and a ramping cat,
And such a deal of skimble-skamble stuff
As puts me from my faith."

1 *Henry IV*, III. i. 148-155.

Those who wade through Merlin's prophecies in Book VII of Geoffrey will echo the sentiments (though not, perhaps, in the same spirit) expressed by the historian: "Merlin, by delivering these and many other prophecies, caused in all that were present an admiration at the ambiguity of his expressions" (see transl. in Giles, *Six Old English Chronicles* [Bohn], p. 206).

The popularity of magicians' prophecies on the stage is illustrated by Friar Bacon's at the conclusion of Greene's play.

¹ In A. H. Bullen's *Works of George Peele*, vol. I. For example: —

"Hips and haws, and sticks and straws,
And things that I gather on the ground, my son."
(ll. 148, 149.)

"Riddle me, riddle me, what's this?" — (l. 287.)

"Fair enough, and far enough from thy fingering." — (l. 319.)

"Spread, table, spread,
Meat, drink, and bread,
Ever may I have
What I ever crave,
When I am spread,
Meat for my black cock,
And meat for my red."
(ll. 382-389.)

The light which is Sacrapant's life-token may be extinguished only by her "that's neither wife, widow, nor maid" (l. 446). It is his destiny "never to die but by a dead man's hand" (l. 448).

"Fee, fa, fum." — (l. 563.)

"Gently dip, but not too deep,
For fear you make the golden beard to weep.
Fair maiden, white and red,
Comb me smooth, and stroke my head,
And thou shalt have some cockell-bread.

ingenuous simplicity of the media which, without much alteration, it reproduces. A rare spirit was George Peele's in his love for nursery yarns; and a rare product is his delicate imaginative mingling of such folk-stories as "Childe Rowland," "East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon," "Jack the Giant Killer," and "The Three Heads of the Well."¹

Something of Peele's spirit is to be seen in cheerful, warm-hearted, lovable Thomas Dekker, though Dekker's play of the wishing-hat and the inexhaustible purse, "Old Fortunatus," is much more conventional in treatment than Peele's. The verse is invested with pomp and dignity; the whole play is cast in a heroic mould, with allegorical personages brought in to elevate and adorn. It is therefore by no means a work of such originality as Peele's. Much more definitely it jogs along in the regular ways of the Elizabethan drama.

Both of the folk-lore plays just mentioned are in their time solitary, written because their respective authors felt an interest in these themes. At no time has there been any vogue of folk-lore plays.² The very special appeal of the subject-matter forbids it.

The magic both of romance and folk-lore is very scantily represented in the Elizabethan drama. It seems, in that bustling period, hardly the stuff of which great drama was to be made. Especially in the 1590's, with their growing bent toward realism, must this manifestly fabulous material have seemed far removed from men's business and bosoms. No relations with contemporary life can be discovered, because it had in contemporary life no close analogues, no serious expression. But another kind of magic and another type of magician were to the Elizabethan thoroughly familiar, earnestly believed in. The magician of this type is seen in *Dr. Faustus* and *Friar Bacon*.

III.

Faustus, *Bacon*, and their fellows during the Renaissance may be termed "practising magicians." Magic is for them a science, an art,

Gently dip, but not too deep,
For fear thou make the golden beard to weep.
Fair maid, white and red,
Comb me smooth, and stroke my head,
And every hair a sheaf shall be,
And every sheaf a golden tree."

(II. 656-660, 806-816.)

"Three blue beans in a blue bladder, rattle, bladder, rattle." — (I. 679.)

[The latter phrase is found as well in Dekker's *Old Fortunatus* (Dekker's *Dramatic Works*, I [1873]: 103).]

¹ The late F. B. Gummere, in his ed. of *The Old Wives Tale* in C. M. Gayley's *Rep. Eng. Comedies*, vol. I, has illuminating notes on much of this folk-lore. See also notes in Joseph Jacobs's *English Fairy Tales*.

² Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, with its burlesque of certain folk-material, should of course not be overlooked.

practised like the other learned professions, and mastered only after the most arduous and prolonged study. For the fuller possession of supernatural powers they have either bartered away their souls, or else placed themselves in constant peril lest the unruly spirits who grudgingly do them service obtain the upper hand. They are gentlemen, scholars, and philosophers, with the frailty as well as the strength of human beings, torn in conscience like all of us, kindly in motive with the best of us, impelled toward their unholy and dangerous studies through very human ambitions for knowledge and power. As such they stand far apart from the mystical, malevolent enchanter of romance, who may be part demon, or is at any rate allied to the powers of darkness.

The typical "practising magician" is far closer to actual reality than any figure hitherto considered. The popular conception of him in the time of Elizabeth is a development from actual figures, broadly represented all over Europe from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries. Sometimes these persons were primarily profound scholars, enlightened investigators, like the great Roger Bacon; but if their researches were devoted to the obscurer branches of knowledge, — among which, in those times, all scientific pursuits were included, — they were sure to be reported, in common fame, as workers in the forbidden arts. But frequently there was more excuse for the imputation of mysterious powers. Many of them in their own belief actually practised magic. Countless numbers labored by secret processes to reproduce the "philosopher's stone" to transmute the baser metals to gold. Others openly engaged in more vulgar conjurations, fortune-telling, or mystic medical quackery.

Many names from Friar Bacon's time down might be mentioned, — names famed for astrology, alchemy, necromancy, or the allied arts. In every century of the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance they flourished in abundance. A group of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries acquired particular renown, — Trithem, Cornelius Agrippa, and Paracelsus. All three belonged to the type of cosmopolitan *scholastici vagantes*, wandering from university to university, from capital to capital, although their activities were mainly associated with Teutonic lands. The most famous of the three is the celebrated Paracelsus, or, to give his name in all its high-sounding completeness, Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombast von Hohenheim. Born in the canton of Zürich, his travels extended over Germany, Hungary, Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, and Russia. In this nomadic life he appears to have turned his learning in any direction where an odd penny might be earned: he drew horoscopes, sold prophecies, told fortunes, interpreted dreams, raised spirits, and finally practised medical quackery.

His most famous exploits, indeed, are concerned with his teaching of medicine at Basel. His fame, and the controversy over the extent of his charlatanism, have persisted in unabated vigor to our own day.¹

The magician of the type of Tritheim, Cornelius Agrippa, and Paracelsus is seen to have been a perfectly familiar figure, persisting in popular knowledge down to the period which we are treating. Indeed, some of the most famous of the wandering magicians were very close to Elizabethan times: Cornelius Agrippa had been dead but twenty-three years, Paracelsus but seventeen, when Elizabeth ascended the throne. Nor were English examples, or practitioners actually contemporary with the Elizabethan public, lacking, though the lives of these local and living magicians were perhaps shorn of some of the romantic features attached to the great continental figures of the past. The most interesting of the reputed Elizabethan magicians was the celebrated Dr. John Dee (1527-1608),² who has left his own record of countless experiments performed in the occult — "psychical research," as we should call it to-day — and in labors toward transmutation; who was deeply learned in astrological lore; who thought he could locate treasures in mines and wrecks. According to his own belief, his experiments were innocent of any diabolic connection; he was indeed an earnest and high-minded investigator. The public, however, were not so charitable. Constantly does Dee complain of the imputations of black magic which were made against him, and more than once were his person and property placed in jeopardy by the actions of the mob.³ The type-figure of the "practising magician" is thus seen to have been very close to the actual experience of the Elizabethans of the 1580's and the 1590's.

Why this type-figure, with its manifold attractiveness in an age of faith, did not really appear in the drama before the end of the eighties, is a question not entirely easy to determine. Probably the answer may be given in a word: there was no vogue of him. The drama was concerning itself with other themes, chiefly Italian,⁴ and the magician had not hitherto been brought on the stage. An occasional early play makes a glance askew at him, catches some distorted reflection of him; but certainly it may be affirmed with some confidence that no

¹ An easily accessible popular biography is that of Hartmann, many times reprinted.

² See Charlotte Fell Smith, *John Dee, and Private Diary of Dr. John Dee* (ed. J. O. Halliwell).

³ An incident furnishes convincing proof of the attitude of the Elizabethan public toward Dee. When, like his prototypes of the middle ages, in the search for a beneficent patron, he had entered on his *Wanderjahre* over Poland, Austria, Bohemia, and various German states, a mob broke into his house at Mortlake and destroyed many of the books which he loved more than his life, which he had spent years of labor and relatively huge sums from an always scanty income to procure.

⁴ See Schelling's *Elizabethan Drama*, I: chaps. iii, v.

representation, in anything like his typical form, was known to the stage before the epoch-making production of Marlowe's "Faustus."

Dr. Johann Faustus has now eclipsed in celebrity all others of his class; yet in actual life he appears to have been a relatively obscure, less dignified version of some of the magicians we have been discussing, — a "philosophus," conjurer, and medical quack of the early sixteenth century. His fame grew after his death, until his legend had gathered to itself all the old tales told of those magicians who gained their powers by selling their souls to the Devil, and who had to pay the penalty of their bargain in a violent death. On some English translation of this story, published soon after the first German "Faustbuch" of 1587, it seems likely that Christopher Marlowe cast his eye.¹

What attracted Marlowe to the story of Faustus is not difficult to see, when we recall what we know of his other plays and of his own personality. Faustus has Marlowe's hunger, and the hunger of Marlowe's heroes, for experience and power; his soul "still climbing after knowledge infinite, and always moving as the restless spheres." This it is that leads him, at the beginning of Marlowe's play, to reject the learned professions one by one, and settle on magic; that alone opens endless vistas, grants boundless dominion, "stretcheth as far as doth the mind of man." So the protagonist takes the most tremendous of all steps: he contracts his immortal soul to the Devil for the delights of knowledge, sensual indulgence, and power; persists, withal, in his contract, though frequently wavering and repentant; and at length, when the time is out, delivers his soul in horrible agony to the fiend. The terrible catastrophe of the Faustus legend stirred Marlowe powerfully: for him the great tragedy of existence lay in man's utter inability to make real the infinite aspirations toward which his spirit climbed. It was the tragedy of the poet's own life as well.

Thus it appears that the subject-matter alone of the Faustus legend was to Marlowe incentive enough for the writing of his play. No interest in magic *per se* drew him to the story, since nowhere else does he show any preoccupation with such themes.² As with other works, he pushed boldly into uncharted seas. With his "Faustus," as with his "Tamburlaine," he was an innovator. The vision of no English writer before Marlowe had seen powerful drama in either the annals of Turkey or the lives of the mediæval magicians.³

¹ See Introduction to A. W. Ward's *Old English Drama* (4th ed., 1901), and *The English Faust-Book of 1592*, ed. by H. Logeman.

² Hardly a reference to them in any of his plays except *Faustus*. Sharply contrasted is the attitude of such dramatists as Dekker, Greene, Heywood, and Middleton, all of whom dwell persistently on the supernatural, although on very different aspects.

³ See C. H. Herford's *Studies in the Literary Relations of England and Germany in the Sixteenth Century*, 186, 187.

Marlowe's play seems to have been first produced in 1588 or at latest early in 1589.¹ It must have been popular from the first;² its enthusiastic acceptance speedily initiated a vogue; and before long many playwrights were seeing the rich dramatic possibilities in such material — alike in the serious study of the magician's guilt, in the spectacular quality of the "shows" which were raised by his art, and in the comic parodies or facile slapsticks which readily crept in. Two plays in particular follow very close in the Marlowe line: they are Robert Greene's "Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay" and the less well known "John a Kent and John a Cumber," attributed to Anthony Munday.³

Once the flattering success of Marlowe's play had pointed the way, Greene, with his practised theatric sense, seized readily the spectacular and comic possibilities of the legend which had grown up about the famous twelfth-century Oxford scholar, Roger Bacon. Greene elaborates with evident gusto on the incident where the brazen head speaks; on Bacon's overcoming of the German pretender Vander-mast; on the revelations of the perspective glass; on the confusion of Miles, the Friar's poor scholar, by the Devil; on the carting away of various characters on his Devilship's back. Of the magic elements, these are what Greene stresses. He does not attempt to follow Marlowe into the stern arena of tragedy.⁴ His hero is not the sin-tossed, nerve-racked figure, with soul bartered away and body forfeit, but rather a guiltless magician, genial, benevolent, who commands his spirits by the all-compelling supremacy of his learned art.

The comedy of "John a Kent and John a Cumber" tracks closely the trail of "Faustus" and "Friar Bacon." This play takes up one of the leading motives of "Friar Bacon," presenting at much length a contest of magicians, who are respectively the champions of opposing contenders in an affair of crossed love. In a setting of the greenwood, instead of the universities, are placed magicians much trivialized, much rationalized. They are "guiltless" beyond a doubt; no suspicion of hellish aid or deep damnation hangs over the genial, high-spirited pair. Moreover, their means are largely human: much that they

¹ See summary of the evidence in Introduction to Ward's *Old English Drama*.

² The first record of a performance was one by Henslowe's company, Sept. 30, 1594 (not as a "ne" [new] play — doubtless a revival). Henslowe produced the play twenty-five times in all, down to Oct. 13 (?), 1597, and apparently revived it (with alterations) in 1602. (Diary, ed. W. W. Greg, 19-54, 172.) The sums received were relatively large, — proof that the play was a favorite.

³ For the text of this play we are dependent upon a manuscript copy signed, according to J. P. Collier (its editor), in the same hand as the rest, "[FIN]IS: ANTHONY MUNDY," and thereafter dated in a different "handwriting of the time," "Decembris, 1595." (See Collier's ed. pub. for Shakespeare Soc., 1851, p. vii.)

⁴ A serious note, however, is struck by the Friar's renunciation of his magic at the end of the play (cf. Prospero's burning of his books). See Herford, *Studies*, 191-193.

accomplish is done by craft. The play, much less impressive than the other two, shows the wearing down and weakening of a literary tradition in the hands of a lesser man, who catered to the public demand. Ironical it is that Marlowe's tremendous conception, as it was echoed on the stage, had descended from a tragic searching of the secret places of the soul to a pleasant entertainment which should while away an idle afternoon.

The trilogy of "practising magician" plays just discussed forms a striking example of the establishment of a dramatic vogue, after a single play of original type had pointed the way. Once on the stage, the figure of the "practising magician" endured in popular favor for decades.

Quite naturally, he appears in various aspects. Faustus represents the wandering scholar; Bacon, the ecclesiastic as magician,¹ — two very familiar types. John a Kent and his friend belong rather to the former than to the latter category. A third type is late to be developed, though it has some early representation. It is the banished nobleman, who takes up magic in his retirement as a solace or for purposes of revenge. A slight glimpse of him is seen long prior to "Faustus" in the character Bomelio of the mythological, masque-like court drama, "The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune" (1582).² A cross-classification, previously noted, separates the magician who has signed the Devil-compact from him who practises magic by the mere force of his art.

All of these motives remained for a long time popular. It is almost impossible to see any significant ebb and flow in the material. The Devil-compact is a feature of Chapman's "Cæsar and Pompey," written early in the seventeenth century.³ It is the centre of the charming anonymous play, "The Merry Devil of Edmonton" (lic. 1607),⁴ in which the famous Peter Fabel, after luring the spirit Corbel

¹ Magic and damnable practices in general had, in the Protestant countries of the Renaissance, identified themselves with such ecclesiastics, partly because learning, so easily confusable with occult practices, was in fact largely in their hands; partly because the luxurious life of many of the Catholic prelates and clergy, and their acquisition of wordly power, had fostered the conception of nefarious compacts. "Luther," as Professor Ward remarks, "meant no metaphor when he described the clergy of the church of Rome as the Devil's priests, and the monk's hood as the proper way of Satan himself; and Calvin was in earnest when he termed necromancers and magicians the agents of Hell, and Papists their slavish imitators" (Ward, *Old English Drama*, xxxii).

² "Shewed before her maiestie at Wyndesor, on the sondaie at night next before newe yeares daie," 1582 (A. Feuillerat, *Documents relating to the Office of the Revels*, 349; Dodsley's *Old Plays* [ed. W. C. Hazlitt], vol. 6 [see acts iv and v]).

³ Variouslly dated 1604-13 (see T. M. Parrott's *Plays and Poems of George Chapman*, 1 : 655). Lic. 1631 (Arber's *Stationers' Register*, 4 : 219).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 3 : 362. Text in Dodsley's *Old Plays* (ed. W. C. Hazlitt), vol. 10, and in C. F. Tucker Brooke's *Shakespeare Apocrypha*.

to sit in a magic chair from which he cannot escape, wrenches from him seven more years of freedom on earth. Carried out in a prologue of elaborate dumb-show, the signing of the contract forms a harrowing feature of Barnabe Barnes's "Devil's Charter" (1607),¹ where Alexander Borgia, by the usual exchange, obtains from the Devil the Popeship. Another Devil-contract may have been the theme of the non-extant "Machiavel and the Devil" of R. Daborne (1613).² The well-known story of the early Christian saint, Theophilus, is told in Massinger and Dekker's "Virgin Martyr" (lic. 1621).³ A similar story of the early times of the church, employed by Calderon in his "Magico Prodigioso," is utilized by the author of "The Two Noble Ladies, or The Converted Conjurer."⁴ A pseudo-contract, with a clever conclusion, is a feature of Davenport's "New Trick to Cheat the Devil" (pub. 1639).⁵

Belonging usually to the stock types are those who in the above-mentioned plays enter into contracts with the Devil. The mediæval magician is represented by Peter Fabel and by Cyprian of "The Two Noble Ladies." Such a one is the Landoff of "The Two Merry Milkmaids" (1620),⁶ — a genial and helpful magician who by his art aids his friends and provides a pleasant entertainment for his ruler. "The Wizard" in the manuscript play of that name may be of the same confraternity.⁷ The ecclesiastic as magician appears in Pope Alexander of "The Devil's Charter," and in Friar John of "A New Trick;" perhaps also he occurred in Henslowe's "Friar Fox and Gillian of Brentford (1599),⁸ which may have been a comic rendering of the theme. Not as actual magician, but rather as controller of the powers of evil, Bishop Dunstan appeared in "A Merry Knack to Know a Knave" (1592).⁹ His association in the popular mind with the Devil caused him to be used in "Grim, the Collier of Croydon" (1600)¹⁰ as a "presenter." The third distinct stock figure among the magicians, the nobleman in banishment, is supremely exemplified in Pros-

¹ Ed. R. B. McKerrow in Bang's *Materialen z. Kunde d. ält-Engl. Dramas*, vol. 6 (see p. v).

² Referred to in Henslowe's Papers (ed. W. W. Greg), 65, 67, 68, 70-74, 90.

³ (Arber's Stationers' Register, 4 : 24.) See Cunningham's ed. of Gifford's *Plays of Massinger*, xxi.

⁴ See Bullen, *Old Plays*, 2 : 430. Dated by Fleay (*Biog. Chron. Eng. Drama*, 2 : 334), 1619-22. See Schelling, *Elizabethan Drama*, 2 : 239.

⁵ Though probably written earlier. Pr. by Bullen, *Old Plays* (n. s.), vol. 3.

⁶ By "J. C." (John Cumber?). Repr. *Tudor Facsimile Texts*.

⁷ See Schelling, 1 : 360; *Brit. Mus. Addit. MS.* 10306 (not seen by the writer).

⁸ Henslowe's *Diary* (ed. W. W. Greg), 102.

⁹ Dodsley's *Old Plays* (ed. W. C. Hazlitt), vol. 6 (see Henslowe's *Diary*, ed. W. W. Greg, Part II, p. 156). Pub. 1594.

¹⁰ Dodsley, vol. 8.

pero. The seer Aramantus in "The Maid's Metamorphosis" (pub. 1600)¹ tells a story which clearly classifies him in the same group.²

Of important female magicians there are no full portraits, although several slight sketches. Here should be mentioned the Dipsas of Lyly's "Endimion" (1585?),³ the Medea of Greene's "Alphonsus" (c. 1591?),⁴ the Melissa of his "Orlando Furioso" (prod. 1592),⁵ the Circe of William Browne's "Inner Temple Masque" (1615),⁶ and the Delphia of "The Prophetess," attributed to Fletcher and Massinger (lic. 1622).⁷ Most of these female wielders of magic are, as their names imply, an inheritance from classical literature. Since, according to Elizabethan experience, the only women engaged in magic were of a very vulgar sort indeed, the dignified enchantress was hardly possible except in a conception derived from, and closely modelled on, the classics. She is usually a minor character; and her occasional appearance seems accidental, depending solely on her occurrence in the subject-matter taken up by the dramatists for independent reasons.

The magician is now seen to have had, in his many forms, a very extended vogue. Hardly appearing before the production of Marlowe's "Faustus," in the late 80's, he enjoyed continuous and assured popularity until the end of the Jacobean period, — a popularity that was fully deserved, when we consider the effectiveness of the novel and spectacular scenes through which he strutted. The public continuously favored him for his theatric interest, just as it continuously shuddered over strange tales of his famous historical prototypes and his analogues in contemporary life. No special events in the history of his vogue need be sought for.

One special reason for his unusual popularity deserves mention, —

¹ Formerly ascribed to Lyly; and pr. in R. W. Bond's Lyly, vol. 3, and in Bullen's Old Plays, vol. 1.

² There are various plays containing figures bearing relations, close or distant, to the "practising magician." There are, for example, "Magi" in Greene and Lodge's Looking Glass for London and England (prod. by Henslowe, 1592, and written probably 1589 or 1590 [see Henslowe's Diary, ed. W. W. Greg, 13-15; and Introduction to the play in C. Collins's Greene, vol. 1]). These create a magic arbor (*Ibid.*, II. i. 490 sqq.; see also III. ii, 1173-1197), and perform other functions. A biblical influence seems to be present. In the very delightful anonymous comedy of bright ballad atmosphere, George a Greene, the Pinner of Wakefield (prod. by Henslowe, 1593 [see Diary, ed. W. W. Greg, 16]), the protagonist masquerades as a hermit-seer or fortune-teller (C. Collins's Greene, 2 : 524 sqq. [act II, sc. iii]; on the authorship of this play, formerly attributed to Greene, see W. W. Greg, quoting R. B. McKerrow, in Malone Soc. Collections, I [pt. 4] : 289, 290).

³ See p. 449.

⁴ Pub. 1599. Pr. in C. Collins's Greene, vol. 1 (see Introduction, p. 70).

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 1. Prod. by Henslowe Feb. 21, 1592 (Diary, ed. W. W. Greg, 13).

⁶ Hazlitt's Browne, 2 (1868) : 239.

⁷ Works of Beaumont and Fletcher (ed. A. R. Waller), vol. 5 (see Schelling, Elizabethan Drama, 2 : 40; and J. Q. Adams, Dramatic Records of Sir Henry Herbert, 23).

the comedy to which the material concerning him readily lent itself. Even the dignified magician indulges freely in comic tricks, makes fun with his art. Still more fun is furnished by the parodies of some clown, typically the magician's stupid famulus or servant-scholar, or by the encounters of the latter with the Devil. The Devil himself is more apt to be a comic than a tragic figure, showing here an inheritance from one aspect of the Vice in the old moralities. The stomachs of the Elizabethans were less queasy, their appetites were more robust, than our own; and they got a rare satisfaction in making fun of the things which they believed — and feared.

The changing era made of the magician himself a jest. The living type, handed down from the middle ages, was in the early seventeenth century in the throes of approaching death: Dr. Dee was among the last of his line. Moreover, there had been so many exposures of fraudulent conjurers and sorcerers, that any special profession of high magic powers was open to suspicion. For these reasons, increasingly as the age progressed, any serious treatment of the figure was likely to seem to rational minds absurd. Most characteristically we should expect to see sceptical, hard-headed Ben Jonson ridiculing the magician's hocus-pocus and mystic balderdash; and we find him so doing, in his usual robust satirical style, in his masque of "The Fortunate Isles" (1624). The magician's paraphernalia, his illusions of spirits, his very devils, are irreverently joked with.

IV.

In several of the plays of magicians just considered, the Devil — or, if not his Majesty, then some potent evil spirit — has appeared as a major character. Usually he comes when summoned, as Mephistophilis to Faustus, remains to grant the magician the indulgences he has bought, and reappears at the end to claim the victim's soul. In other plays the Evil Powers intervene in the world on their own account. In many of the stories of magicians, the Devil, at the moment when the hero is in "despair," willing to renounce his religion, cursing his God, seizes the opportunity to run post-haste from hell, and, by sophistry or material inducements, to entice the soul when its powers of resistance are weakest. So he appears, without being summoned, to Fronto in "Cæsar and Pompey."

In other plays he appears of himself on mischief bent; sent, perhaps, to get information in the world, or to ensnare souls, as the result of the deliberation of a council of devils. Such a theme is presented in "Grim, the Collier of Croydon" (1600).¹ The devils despatch Belphegor to earth to investigate amazing accounts of woman's wickedness. He is to marry, observe, return, and report.

Needless to say, he finds the worst to be true, and is finally glad to discover a convenient hole, through which he willingly sinks to hell. A similar story forms the basis of Ben Jonson's "Devil is an Ass" (1616). There the poor devil, Pug, is indeed a *dummer Teufel*, — outwitted, cozened at every turn. The satirical possibilities of the story made it attractive to Ben Jonson, and also gave it some permanency as a stage theme. It is used once more, after the Restoration, in John Wilson's "Belphegor" (1690).¹

Meantime, in 1610, Dekker had got out a play,² based also on the theme of "the emissary to earth," in which not one devil, but three several devils, are sent out to investigate. One of these enters a monastery, becomes the cook, and corrupts the monks by rich fare. Here Dekker utilizes the well-known story of "Friar Rush."³ Perhaps he had got the hint from a play of 1601 recorded by Henslowe, "Friar Rush and the Proud Woman of Antwerp."⁴

This motive of "the emissary to earth" is seen to be developed relatively late. Its characteristic making free with the Devil, vigorously satirizing the cult of him, and using him as a medium for equally vigorous satire of human foibles, and the equally characteristic presenting of accurate pictures of domestic life, fit very well the kind of realistic and satiric drama popular from Jonson's time on, but are not in keeping with the more highly romantic style of the 1590's. The motive was utilized when dramatic practice was ready for it. The conditions here are not very different from those of the real witch plays shortly to be discussed.

V.

All of the more vulgar traffickers in the supernatural may conveniently be considered in an inclusive grouping. In their number are prominent the conjurer, the wise woman, the witch, and similar figures, by whatever names called. Included are also even more vulgar frauds, charlatans, and knaves, who deluded credulous customers by any trick of legerdemain or mystic nonsense.

Elizabethan life was crowded with these figures, — all of them. Every person of ordinary experience had heard of many such. Con-

¹ Dramatic Works of John Wilson, 1874. The suggestion for this whole line of plays probably came in the first instance from Macchiavelli's story, *The Marriage of Belphegor*.

² If it Be not Good, the Devil is in It. Pr. Dramatic Works of Thos. Dekker, 1873, vol. 3.

³ In the many versions of his printed history he appears as a malignant fiend, who, under the disguise of a friar, brings a religious house to dire confusion. In ultimate origin, probably a house cobold (see references in G. L. Kittredge's article, "The Friar's Lantern and Friar Rush," in *Pub. Mod. Lang. Ass'n*, 15 : 415, No. 4, footnote).

⁴ Payments made to John Day and Wm. Haughton July 4, 14, Nov. 9, 29, 1601 (Henslowe's Diary, ed. W. W. Greg, 143-151, 164).

jurers, for example, of one type or another, were common. The careers of persons like Reade, Forman, Lambe, and Hartley,¹ are well known. Such conjurers drove a brisk and varied trade. Perhaps most commonly they performed some species of medical quackery, or "unwitched" the diseased with a vulgar sort of exorcism. By various charms, incantations, and philters they professed to excite or to cool love. Often they performed divination for the location of hidden treasure or lost or stolen goods; or they told fortunes or cast horoscopes. If the conjurer were unscrupulous and willing to take the risk, — a risk freely assumed when convictions were difficult to secure and relatively few, — he might even furnish powders and charms, or perform magic rites, to lame and to kill.

The more trivial, more innocuous of these activities were the regular stock in trade of numerous professional *wise* or *cunning* women. In addition, they commonly practised midwifery. The *wise woman*, as such, appears to have a more definite status than the *wise man*. Actual examples, with well-attested histories, are, from the relative obscurity of the subject, difficult to adduce, but references to such persons are numerous.² Heywood's "Wise Woman of Hogsdon" may be taken as a racy, faithful portrait of the least rascally, most benevolent type.

The witch who was tried and condemned in the Elizabethan courts differed from the wise woman, customarily, in having no professional status. Her nefarious practices were usually for her own petty advancement or to satisfy her own petty grudges. Typically — though by no means always — from the lowest stratum of society, she lived in some hovel in abject poverty, in grossest immorality. She was reputed to employ — usually, on trial, was made to confess that she kept at her house, in the form of dogs, cats, toads, or other "lewd"

¹ Simon Reade was a quack physician and cunning man of Southwark. In the former capacity he was finally prosecuted by the College of Physicians (1602) for practising without a license; in the latter he was indicted for conjuration and the invocation of unclean spirits, though eventually he received the royal pardon (1608). Simon Forman practised quackery and necromantic arts from 1597 to his death in 1611. He claimed the power to discover lost treasure, and was especially successful in his dealings with women, being called in by the infamous Countess of Essex to practise magic inducing love. Lambe and Hartley were on a lower level. The former was a rogue willing to turn his hand to nearly any conjuration, or quackery, or crime. Edmund Hartley is now remembered chiefly through his connection with the celebrated Starchie case (1596-97). As a noted conjurer, he had been called in to quiet the stricken Starchie children, but was accused eventually of having communicated an evil spirit to them, and was convicted and hanged for drawing a magic circle (see G. L. Kittredge, "English Witchcraft and James I," in *Toy Presentation Volume*; *Dict. Nat. Biog.*; *Social England*, vol. 4; *Wm. Lilly's History*; *Forman's Diary*; *Notestein's History of English Witchcraft*). See reference to Reade in Ben Jonson's *Alchemist*, I. i.; and to Lambe, in his *Staple of News*, conversation of the gossips at end act III.

² See Notestein's *History*, 20-22, and references there cited.

small animals — familiar spirits to do her bidding. Their services she had obtained from the Devil by selling her soul. Them she rewarded by allowing them to suck her body. Sexual relations with the familiars or the Devil himself were confidently believed in, and frequently confessed, as well as participation in orgiastic "Witches' Sabbaths." Their familiars the witches employed nearly always for personal ends, — sometimes to obtain love for the witch; more often to steal goods; still more often to feed fat the witches' grudges against neighbors who had reviled them or refused them alms or petty gifts. Accordingly the familiars were used to spoil domestic processes, such as baking or brewing; to cause ailments in neighbors' geese, hogs, or cattle; to afflict neighbors or their more easily susceptible children with wasting sickness or fits; to lame and even to kill.

Such was the ordinary conception of the witch during the reigns of Elizabeth and James, as brought out in dozens of trials.¹ We shall not be wrong if we describe witchcraft agitation during this period as simply continuous. For the playwrights and the public, witchcraft in general, and known cases thereof, must have been a topic of unceasing conversation. Everybody knew some old hag who was reputed to be a witch; there were prosecutions for witchcraft, particularly in Middlesex and the neighboring counties, almost every year;² and that the facts of witchcraft might not become stale and dull, sensational cases periodically excited the imagination of the public, — cases that were typically reported in the greedily devoured tracts which in that day served instead of the lucubrations of the modern yellow press.

Some of the more famous trials may be briefly mentioned. In 1566, at Chelmsford, Essex, not far from London, Mother Waterhouse was executed for the keeping of cat and toad familiars that she used "to kill geese, hogs, and cattle of neighbors," and "at length . . . to kill a neighbor whom she disliked, and finally her own husband."³ In 1579, and again in 1589, further outbreaks at Chelmsford resulted in the execution of three women on each occasion.⁴ Meantime, in the same county, and not far from Chelmsford, at St. Oses, or St. Osyth's, had occurred one of the most remarkable affairs in Elizabethan times. Ursley Kemp, accused of laming and killing neighbors and

¹ The details are repeated again and again. Dr. Notestein's *History* summarizes conveniently a vast quantity of this evidence.

² Of all the years of Elizabeth's reign, only in eight early years has Dr. Notestein failed to find prosecutions for witchcraft, and the gaps here are in all likelihood merely a lack of extant evidence. His records for James's reign show only one blank year (see Appendix C to his *History*). "London was . . . the centre of the belief, . . . [and] the counties adjacent to it could . . . claim more than two-thirds of the executions" (51).

³ See Notestein's *History*, 35, 385, and references.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 38-40, 387, 390, and references.

their children, was made to confess to feeding four imps, — Tyffin, Titty, Piggen, and Jacket. Her confessions involved others, until ultimately sixteen persons were accused, of whom thirteen seem to have been executed.¹ Another trial of unusual interest was that at Warboys, Huntingdonshire (1593). Mother Samuel, her daughter Agnes, and her husband John, were all executed for tormenting by spirits the children of the prominent Throckmorton family.² The activities of John Darrel (chiefly 1596–97), who professed to exorcise the possessed, and controversy over whom started an elaborate pamphlet war, should not be overlooked.³ In 1602–03 the trial of Elizabeth Jackson at London excited much attention.⁴

Aroused by these and other less famous cases, public opinion put through, in the second year of James's reign, a new statute imposing death as the penalty for all maleficent witchcraft, whether it resulted in death or not, and otherwise slightly increasing the severity of the existing law.⁵ For a number of years after the passing of this statute, the agitation, though continuous, was mild. Then occurred, in 1612, the sensational case at Pendle, Lancashire, as a result of which ten persons were sentenced to death.⁶ Of special interest in this study of the drama are the case at Edmonton, Middlesex, in 1621, when Elizabeth Sawyer was hanged; and the second Lancashire case, 1633, when probably seventeen witches were tried and condemned, although later reprieved by the King.⁷ Both of these cases, especially the latter, aroused widespread interest, and were abundantly represented in pamphlet publications and in literature.

The cases just mentioned are only a few of the most celebrated.⁸ The agitation, in fact, seems endemic throughout practically the whole sweep of the Elizabethan drama. It should be observed in particular that public interest and discussion on witchcraft and all related themes must have been active for several decades before 1600. The whole group of conjurers, wise women, and witches was thoroughly familiar. Hence portraits of such persons in literature were sure to be readily recognized and understood. Yet, surprisingly enough, the occurrences of these figures in the drama down almost to the new century

¹ See Notestein's History, 40–46, 388, and references.

² *Ibid.*, 46–51, 391, and references.

³ *Ibid.*, chap. iv, and references.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 395, and references.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 101–106. King James was not responsible. His reputation has been conclusively cleared by G. L. Kittredge, "English Witchcraft and James I," in *Toy Presentation Volume*, pp. 9 ff.

⁶ Notestein, *loc. cit.*, 121–130, 397, 398, and references.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 136 (footnote), 146–157, 400, 402, and references.

⁸ See Notestein's book, *passim*, for descriptions of others and reference to the original literature.

are few, and such representations as do find place are seldom sketched from contemporary life.

The earlier conjurers and witches in the drama are borrowed, instead, with little change, from conventional "characters" in other literatures. In particular, a debt to the Italian is shown in a number of interesting plays. In Gascoigne's well-known "Supposes" (1566),¹ translated from Ariosto's "I Suppositi," the parasite Pasiphilo exhibits a pretended knowledge of palmistry.² In two other plays adapted from the Italian, or showing Italian influences, a stock character is brought over bodily. This person, the fraudulent or pretended conjurer, had a well-established vogue in Italian comedy of the sixteenth century³ before Grazzini took it up in his "La Spiritata" (1561), and combined with it another motive, — that of hoaxing a man into the belief that his house is haunted by spirits. This play the unknown English author⁴ of "The Bugbears" of the middle sixties has followed with reasonable fidelity. In the chief "nigromantick" scene of the play,⁵ the English writer has added to the burlesque enumeration of spirits in the original a few from English nursery tales, — etins and pickhorns,

"puckes, puckerels, hob howlard, bygorn, & Robin Goodfellow;"
"hob Goblin, Rawhead, & bloudibone the ouglie."

He has at the same time added to his "cunning man," one Trappola, the significant attribute of quack medicine, — a profession which he knew was practised by English analogues of Grazzini's type-character. We may accordingly regard the Englishman as making an approach in his own way, and according to the standards of his time, toward a realistic portrait.⁶

Unlike "The Bugbears," the "education play," "Misogonus,"⁷ of unproved authorship, and of date undetermined within the sixties or seventies,⁸ is not translated from the Italian. It evinces, however, many Italian influences. It exhibits once more a "pretended con-

¹ For text and discussion, see R. W. Bond, *Early Plays from the Italian*.

² I. ii.

³ See full discussion by Bond, *loc. cit.*, Introd.

⁴ Signed at the end of act v of the manuscript "Johannus Jeffere scribebat hoc." Author, or merely a scribe? See Bond's Introd. for this and for the question of date.

⁵ III. iii.

⁶ Of course the whole thing is a pretence, but, barring its obvious burlesque features, is within itself consistent.

⁷ Also in Bond's *Early Plays from the Italian*.

⁸ Bond dates 1576-77. Previous commentators had dated in the sixties. The leading candidate for authorship is "Laurentius Bariwona," whose name adorns the title-page of the manuscript. Professor Kittredge is inclined to consider this a pseudonymous anagram (Bar = "son of," iona = "John," — "Johnson") for "Laurence Johnson" (*Journ. of Germanic Philol.*, 3 [1901] : 335-341; and Bond's Introd.).

jurer," one Cacurgus, who, like Trappola, professes both magic and medical arts.¹ His portrait is clearly a feeble drawing of the same Italian stock character.

The Italian group includes another play, of much later date and firmer workmanship, featuring this time a witch (or wise woman) and bawd. The play is "Fidele and Fortunio, or The Two Italian Gentlemen"² (1584), an adaptation of the "Il Fedele" of Luigi Pasqualigo (1575).³ The particular character of interest in "Fidele and Fortunio" is Medusa, called a witch, who in one scene names over a long list of charms, and who later in a graveyard attempts with a waxen image a conjuration for love. She also exercises the trade of bawd under cover of peddling. The whole conception of Medusa is conventional and foreign. There are few English borrowings;⁴ we have only another stock Italian character bodily transported, and even this appears to have had no influence.⁵ The time for the witch on the stage was not yet ripe.

The figure in "Fidele and Fortunio," sunk in the practice of black sorcery as she was, could hardly be called by any other name than "witch;" yet in her generally handy character, particularly in her capacity as bawd, she bears some analogies to the more harmless professional wise or cunning woman. A clear example of the latter type, in a very English dress, of a realism not hitherto approached, is John Lyly's "Mother Bombie" (c. 1590?). The indefatigable seeker after sources has been unable to discover a definite source for this play; and in particular the title-character seems, contrary to Lyly's

¹ See III. iii.

² Pub. in Malone Soc. Reprints, 1909. See W. W. Greg's spirited discussion of the authorship in Malone Soc. Collections, I (pt. 3) : 218-226. Collier (in Hist. Eng. Dramatic Poetry, 3 : 242) quoted a somewhat suspicious dedication on a copy which apparently no one else has ever seen, signed "A. M." Charles Crawford, in his ed. of England's Parnassus, ascribed the play to Chapman, chiefly on the strength of some lines from Fidele and Fortunio there quoted over Chapman's name. T. M. Parrott, Chapman's latest editor, is inclined to think that, even though Collier's dedication may be a forgery, the play is in all probability Munday's (Mod. Philol., 13 : 65 ff., No. 5 [September, 1915]).

³ Another version was made by Abraham Fraunce, in his Latin comedy Victoria, prior to the year 1583. Ed. G. C. Moore Smith in Bang's Materialien, vol. 14 (1906).

⁴ The Pedant, who observes the conjuration from the harborage of a tomb, parodies Medusa's enumeration of devils, adding a few of his own, *sotto voce* :—

"Ottamanus, Sophye, Turke, and the great Cham:
Robin goodfellowe, Hobgoblin, the deuill and his dam."
(II. ii.)

There may also be something of an English conception in Medusa's side-trade of bawd under cover of peddling (IV. i).

⁵ Collier doubted that the play was ever acted (Hist. Eng. Dramatic Poetry, 3 : 241), and his opinion has been echoed by Fleay (Biog. Chron., 2 : 113) and by Ward (Eng. Dramatic Lit., 1 : 431). Greg believes the play saw some popularity on the stage (Malone Soc. Collections, I [pt. 3] : 226).

practice, to be a portrait, according to the standards of the time and the author, of an English type.¹ Mother Bombie is represented as a benevolent "wise woman," who, though accused of being a witch, denies it, and gives no evidence of trafficking with infernal powers. She is able, according to repute, to "tell fortunes, expound dreames, tell of things that be lost, and devine of accidents to come;" and all these attributes she exemplifies in the play. To her nearly all the characters in the tangled web of the plot troop for advice; and although they are for the moment much mystified by her prognostications in oracular doggerel, at the end, when they all compare notes, they agree that the old woman has spoken true, and praise her kindness and good works.

The gentleness of this portrait, if, as seems probable, it is an idealized drawing from observation, is remarkable, yet, on fuller consideration, is fully consistent with Lyly's dramatic practice. He has taken as model a racy figure (the very highest of her type, in the first place), and refined and ennobled her to fit into his usual graceful comedy, — a comedy which, in contrast to later Elizabethan practice, did not allow the vulgarly grotesque. The comedy of Lyly's period is not realistic, and Lyly's own work least of all so.

In chronological progression we turn now to four plays of the highest interest, all belonging to the Shakespearean canon, — the first and second parts of "Henry VI" (1590-92?), "Richard III" (1593), and "The Comedy of Errors" (1591?). In these we find very illuminating use of the witch and conjurer.

Shakespeare and his collaborators in "1 Henry VI" have often been reviled for degrading the heroic figure of Joan of Arc to a common witch; yet they were but perpetuating the English national tradition; following, moreover, the well-reputed authority of Holinshed. The chronicler is nevertheless everywhere greatly expanded; brief incidents are made over into lengthy scenes, and the merest hints into important passages. Throughout the play, Talbot and others are made to hurl at Joan the accusation of witchcraft.² The real witch scenes, which show significant elaboration of Holinshed, are in the fifth act. In v. iii we are suddenly in the midst of genuine witch-lore, which bases on Holinshed only for the general hint that Joan practised witchcraft. Here Joan, or "La Pucelle," dismayed at the failure of the French, calls on her spirits for help; but they refuse their aid, as the spirits customarily did when the witch was about to fall. Joan offers increasing rewards, — she will feed them with her blood, "lop a member off," "pay recompense" with her body, or finally give "body, soul, and all." But the spirits troop silently away, and

¹ See R. W. Bond's Lyly, vol. 3, Introd.

² I. v. 5-7; II. i. 14, 15, 25, 26; III. ii. 38, 39, 52, 121, 122; III. iii. 58, 59.

immediately thereafter Joan is captured. Act v, scene iv, shows further elaborations, repeating incidents found in many a witch trial. There is the usual denial of the crime: and then, when Joan sees that avowal of her pure virgin life will avail not a whit to save her, she makes a plea often heard to stay execution of witches; namely, that she is with child.¹ This feature comes from Holinshed, but not the gloating elaboration of the plea, Pucelle fathering her child upon three men in succession. All failing, the witch goes forth to her execution, cursing in characteristic fashion, and calling down vengeance on her prosecutors: —

“Then lead me hence;—with whom I leave my curse:
 May never glorious sun reflex his beams
 Upon the country where you make abode!
 But darkness and the gloomy shade of death
 Environ you; till mischief and despair
 Drive you to break your necks or hang yourselves!”

Certain details, gathered from current knowledge of witches, are thus seen in “I Henry VI” to have been added to the meagre material of Holinshed. But these are the most commonplace stock features of witchcraft; there is none of the tang of individual cases and incidents; moreover, the whole treatment of the thing is formal, — the verse is lofty, the statement couched in stiff, conventional, almost affected style. We are still a long way from any faithful study of the Elizabethan witch.

The second part of “Henry VI” provides a scene² which is somewhat more vulgar. “Margery Jordan, the cunning witch, and Roger Bolingbroke, the conjurer,” at the instance of the Duchess of Gloucester, raise with due ceremonies the spirit Asmath, who, on demand, speaks the fates that shall befall the king and other prominent political personages. Hardly has the fiend given his information when the party is surprised and apprehended. Needless to say, their punishment is severe; the Duchess being condemned to banishment, the witch to be burned in Smithfield, and Bolingbroke and other men concerned to be strangled on the gallows.³ The punishment meted out to the sorcerers would have been readily understood by the Elizabethan, since the statute of 1562 had fixed the death-penalty for those who used conjurations of evil and wicked

¹ An interesting example is that of Mother Samuel in the celebrated Warboys case (1593) previously alluded to. I quote Notestein (50): “The mother was induced to plead pregnancy as a delay to execution, but after an examination by a jury was adjudged not pregnant. The daughter [Agnes] had been urged to make the same defence, but spiritedly replied, ‘It shall never be said that I was both a witch and a whore.’” The plea was a very common one.

² I. iv.

³ II. iii. 1-13.

spirits;¹ and conjurations such as those of the play, directed toward finding out from spirits when Elizabeth's life would end, or, more heinously, toward actually practising against her life, were common, and greatly disturbed the Queen's ministers.² Yet, close to contemporary life as the thing is, the outlines are supplied by the chronicles much more absolutely than in the *La Pucelle* scenes.³ The writers of "2 Henry VI" (or, rather, the writers of the old play, "The First Part of the Contention," from which the witchcraft scenes are reproduced, with no significant change, in "2 Henry VI") are merely reporting history with artistic alterations and the supplying of detail from stores of common knowledge.

A further historical witchcraft allusion, which has in fact actually condensed the chronicle, may briefly be dismissed. It is the well-known scene in "Richard III" (III. iv) where Gloucester, pulling back his left sleeve, exhibits his arm which had been shrunk from birth, and charges the deformity to witchcraft: —

"Look how I am bewitch'd; behold, mine arm
Is like a blasted sapling, wither'd up;
And this is Edward's wife, that monstrous witch,
Consorted with that harlot strumpet Shore,
That by their witchcraft thus have marked me."

This is Holinshed, III. 722, with only verbal alterations. The scene may be regarded as entirely historical.

Of greater significance than any of the preceding plays is "The Comedy of Errors." Mere hints in the "Menaechmi" of Plautus, and perhaps a scene also in the same writer's "Amphitryon," are made the occasion for racy commentary and faithful detail copied seemingly from actual observation. The inextricable confusion caused by the mistakes in identity furnish the cue. Whereas in the "Menaechmi" the characters only consider that they are being made fun of or that their interlocutors are out of their heads,⁴ the Antipholuses and the Dromios conjecture the explanation that would naturally occur to the Elizabethan; namely, that the confusion can be explained only on the supposition that witchcraft and sorcery have been at work. "Lapland sorcerers" inhabit the place, aver Antipholus of Syracuse and his man Dromio; the Courtesan is "Mistress Satan, the Devil, the Devil's dam, fiend, witch, sorceress," — "as you are all."⁵ But one conclusion is to be drawn from all this wild

¹ For analysis of the law, see G. L. Kittredge, "English Witchcraft and James I.," in *Toy Presentation Volume*, p. 8.

² See Notestein, 18, 19, 24-28; and, for additional brief notices, Notestein's Appendix C, under years 1578, 1584, 1589, 1594.

³ Hall is here closer than Holinshed (Hall's Chronicle, 1850, p. 202).

⁴ *Menaechmi*, II. ii, iv; III. iii; IV. iii; V. ii.

⁵ I. ii. 97-102; II. ii. 190-202; III. ii. 149-161; IV. iii. 45-82.

talk: Antipholus of Syracuse and his man are mad, and require treatment. The very funny scene where this is given (iv. iv) is shifted from the Latin, and made to conform to Elizabethan life. The legitimate physician of Plautus has become the schoolmaster Pinch, —

“A needy, hollow-ey’d, sharp-looking wretch,” —

who is known as a conjurer, and who (following Elizabethan practice) attempts to eject the fiend from the possessed by exorcism: —

“I charge thee, Satan, hous’d within this man,
To yield possession to my holy prayers,
And to thy state of darkness hie thee straight;
I conjure thee by all the saints in heaven.”¹

Pinch’s charms being too weak, master and man are bound,² — only to escape, and nearly kill the conjurer.

Now, this scene has a strongly realistic smack. A case of madness was regularly assumed as “possession” by the Elizabethan; and either a clergyman (under certain circumstances),³ or more often the local conjurer, was called upon to eject the fiend. In “The Comedy of Errors” we accordingly have a bit of realism far in advance of anything hitherto encountered, — an innovation, indeed, in the dramatic practice of the 1590’s.

Certain confident generalizations can now be made as to the handling of witch and conjurer down to the middle 90’s, to be more specific down to 1597 or 1598, — years which, as will appear shortly, mark a significant break for this material. Prior to these years there are the figures of conjurer and witch borrowed from other literatures, as the Italian, and also similar figures brought over quite incidentally from historical accounts into chronicle histories retold to display the great incidents of the national past. In both groups some elaboration from the writer’s observation is to be expected. In only very few plays, like “Mother Bombie” and “The Comedy of Errors,” and those plays comedies or actual farces, to which realism easily adapts itself, do we find racy portraits from life.

¹ iv. iv. 57–60.

² Compare the practical joke on Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, iii. iv, iv. ii. Here Malvolio, whom the conspirators pretend to consider mad, is confined and bound in order that he may be freed of the evil spirit, who has no liking for straight-jackets. The practice was common in such circumstances.

³ Particularly by the Catholics. Rev. John Darrel (himself a Puritan) was the most notorious of the exorcists. See full discussion, with many contemporary references, in Notestein, chap. iv. Over the exorcists raged an extended pamphlet controversy, in which the most celebrated document is Harsnett’s *Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (L., 1605). For the fits of the Starchie children (1597) Dr. Dee had advised the help of “godlie preachers” (Notestein, 79). See Ben Jonson’s attitude on pretended possession and exorcism, below, p. 481.

Yet even here there is nothing drastic, nothing photographic, none of that "dirty drab" which we are accustomed to associate with the word "realism," and which surely finds expression abundantly in the works, of a later date, from the pens of such men as Jonson. The gross sensationalism of the witch accounts over which the public gloated, — the revolting details, for instance (rather than a mere mention), of intercourse with familiars, of the petty animosities of wrinkled old hags, of the vulgar tricks of our Faces and Subtles, — are prior to 1597 strangely absent. Enough has been said to show that throughout the reign of Elizabeth no figures were to the masses, high and low, more familiar than those of the wise woman and the witch. The playwrights, men of their time, show besides, by casual allusion, full knowledge of the ordinary facts of witchcraft and sorcery. Yet material basing thereon is scanty almost to the turn of the century; while such utilizations as exist are treated "romantically," — idealized and purified. Why, — the question insistently forces itself on us, — why, with the continuous and abounding interest clearly seen in all aspects of the supernatural, in none more than in the vulgar figures we have just been discussing, is there no topical drama of witchcraft whatever, and only a very meagre expression of anything that could be likened to realism?

The reasons can be none other than purely literary reasons, explicable solely from the history of Elizabethan dramatic practice and the vogue of dramatic types. First, the drama up to the middle 90's is not as a whole topical. Its plots are borrowed from English history, Italian story, classic legends, mediæval tales¹ — from any source rather than contemporary life. It does not photograph its own times. It hardly copies even court life, and ignores almost completely, except for very rough comedy, the life of the lower classes. Some progress toward realism is evident in the 90's, but the fashion of dramatizing any and every thing had not yet set in.

That being true, the omission is not difficult to understand. Certainly the witch and her coterie were figures too unpoetical for tragedy of the higher sort. For comic effect they were more suitable; yet, if they were to be used here, some readjustments were necessary. The guiltless wise woman was easily adaptable, as was the relatively trivial figure of the magician's man; but the shadow of her terrible compact and fearful doom still hung over the witch. Low comedy was not yet ready for her. With the tone of "domestic drama" she harmonized more perfectly, but "domestic drama" as a type was yet unknown on the English stage.

Finally, her vogue was simply not established. There was at

¹ A glance at the topical chapters in Schelling's *Elizabethan Drama* will establish this point.

hand, to be sure, abundant material for plays of witchcraft; but such an abundance by no means assures the writing and production of plays based thereon, even if the public is actually in a mood to receive them. As in the case of "Faustus" a successful magician play started a long line of dramas on similar themes, so here a successful witch play was needed to initiate the dramatic vogue of this particular type.

VI.

The evidence for the initiation of such a vogue in 1597 is not conclusive only because the plays no longer survive. The indispensable Henslowe tells the story. In December, 1597, he mentions "Mother Redcap."¹ This is probably a study of a wise woman, continuing the type of play got under way by Lyly's "Mother Bombie."² Earlier in the same year Henslowe notes a performance of "The Witch of Islington."³ By the next year had been written "Black Joan."⁴ The former was either an out-and-out witch play, or else such a play with political bearings.⁵ The latter, in all probability, was a witch play also. If we may judge from the titles and the growing realism of dramatic treatment, they were of a kind far closer to actual life than those hitherto considered. The approach toward realistic drama, especially comedy, may be studied in the pages of the literary historians. It is especially associated with a new group of writers, all of whom began to produce very close to this time. The dramatic careers of Ben Jonson and of Dekker start about 1597; of Heywood, probably in 1596; of Chapman, probably in 1596; of Marston, about 1599. In some degree in all these writers a trend toward realism is evident, — a trend continued in others who shortly followed. The stage career of Middleton, for instance, begins by 1602; of Webster, *c.* 1602.⁶

¹ Payments made to Munday and Drayton, Dec. 22, 28, 1597; Jan. 5, 1598 (Henslowe's Diary, ed. W. W. Greg, 82, 83).

² Mother Redcap is mentioned in Heywood's *Wise Woman of Hogsdon* (i. ii; iv).

³ July 14, 28, 1597 (Henslowe's Diary, ed. W. W. Greg, 54).

⁴ In Henslowe's inventory of books belonging to the stock, and bought since March 3, 1598 (Henslowe's Papers, ed. W. W. Greg, 121). It is mentioned there along with other plays of recent production.

⁵ One of Ben Jonson's notes to his *Masque of Queens* may be apposite. He is speaking of waxen images: "Bodin. Daemon., lib. ii. cap. 8, hath . . . a relation of a French ambassador's, out of England, of certain pictures of wax, found in a dunghill near Islington, of our late queen's: which rumour I myself (being then very young) can yet remember to have been current" (Note to passage on pp. 111, 112, in Gifford's ed., revised by Cunningham, vol. 7).

⁶ Jonson received money from Henslowe on July 28, 1597; he was engaged on a play on Dec. 3, 1597. Dekker received payments for a play called *Phaeton* on Jan. 15, 1598. Money is recorded as lent by Henslowe "for Heywood's book" in a list of sums put out

It was high time that witchcraft themes should be taken up, for, as previously pointed out, the witchcraft agitation had been continuous and strong in England from the early years of the reign of Elizabeth. The dramatists, finally responding to the interest of the public of which they formed a part, manifest the fullest pre-occupation with witchcraft and all related themes during the thirty years 1597-1627 or thereabouts. Their most active concern is indicated in the first two decades of the seventeenth century. In the period of dramatic activity there are numerous scenes and more numerous references in vast variety of kind and treatment. Much of the material is new to the English drama, or, if not entirely new, is yet for the first time clearly revealed.

The careers of conjurers like Lambe and Forman have already been mentioned. With the advance in realistic treatment, such figures now become very popular in the drama. It is difficult to distinguish between the conjurer who had some belief in his own powers, and arrant rascals who were merely bleeding credulous dupes. All such persons may be conveniently grouped together.

Their vogue in the first few decades of the seventeenth century may be seen from a rapid survey of the principal plays which feature them. Dekker's "Whore of Babylon" (1604)¹ presents two doctors, Paridel and Ropus, as well as a hired conjurer, who practise in various ways — by means of a waxen image, poison, or actual violence — to murder the Queen. In the lively "Puritan, or The Widow of Watling Street" (pr. 1607),² usually referred to as "The Puritan Widow," is presented a group of more downright rogues and impostors, particularly one George Pye-Board, who pretends to be a fortune-teller and physician, and one Peter Skirmish, a "figure-caster, or a conjurer." A rogue of suave professional manners is the quack physician, said to be "exquisite in the art of magic," Dr. Glistler of Middleton's "Family of Love" (1607).³ Jonson's "Alchemist" (1610) is a very notable exposure of a group of rogues, who with only a smattering of learned terms, or what pass as such with their dupes, are ready to practise almost any art that will bring them in money. Their leading line is of course transmutation of metals, but they have many

"since October 14," 1596. Chapman's *Blind Beggar of Alexandria* was prod. by Henslowe Feb. 12, 1596. Marston received from Henslowe money toward a play on Sept. 28, 1599. Middleton's *Blurt, Master Constable* was pub. 1602, but *The Old Law* may have been written in 1599. Webster collaborated in the plays *Caesar's Fall* and *The Two Harpies*, for which Henslowe made payments May 22, 29, 1602 (see Henslowe's *Diary*, ed. W. W. Greg, 28, 45, 70, 82, 83, 112, 166, 167; and *Works of Thomas Middleton*, ed. A. H. Bullen, I. xiv, xv).

¹ Pub. 1607, but doubtless written shortly after Elizabeth's death. See *Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, 2 (1873) : especially 189, 195, 196, 226, 227, 250, 263, 264.

² In C. F. Tucker Brooke's *Shakespeare Apocrypha*.

³ In Bullen's *Middleton*, vol. 3 (II. iii, iv; III. iv, v, vi).

other strings to their bow. Chiefly as an astrologer does Albumazra, in Tomkins's play of that name (1614),¹ convince his dupes, although his rogueries range widely.

A group of very low cheats and rascals must now claim our attention. In "The Widow," by Middleton and others (c. 1616?),² there operates a pretended mountebank empiric, Latrocina, who does not display, however, the usual magic and mysticism. Not so in "The Mountebank's Masque" (1618), attributed to Marston,³ where the title-character exercises the double function of physician and conjurer. In "The Bloody Brother, or Rollo, Duke of Normandy" (c. 1616?),⁴ by Fletcher (and others?), figure prominently a group of very low quacks and rogues indeed, five in number, who practise astrology, medicine, fortune-telling, divination for the recovery of stolen goods, the figuring of distant events in a magic glass, and in general all the more disreputable pursuits of the rascally "cunning man." A rogue certainly no more respectable is the Forobosco of "The Fair Maid of the Inn" (lic. 1626).⁵ Forobosco is a pretended astrologer and conjurer who has a "clown" as assistant, — a figure parallel to the magician's comic famulus.

It is refreshing to turn from these cheats to a few persons of respectability and honesty. Such is the Peter Vecchio of Fletcher's "The Chances" (c. 1615?),⁶ a gentle schoolmaster who for benevolent ends plays a part as wizard and astrologer. Another respectable character is a gentleman devoted to alchemy who is introduced in Middleton's "Anything for a Quiet Life" (1617?).⁷

Conjurers, astrologers, wise men, cheats, and frauds of every grade of respectability, of diverse attributes and practices, are thus seen to have been extremely popular on the stage for the first three decades of the century. Such figures lend themselves readily to comic or satiric

¹ In Dodsley's *Old Plays* (ed. W. C. Hazlitt), vol. 11. See also Ward, *Eng. Dramatic Lit.*, 3 : 179, 180.

² In Bullen's *Middleton*, vol. 5 (see especially iv. i, ii). Variouslly dated 1608-25. See Bullen, *loc. cit.*, 1 : lxxxvii; Fleay, *Biog. Chron.*, 2 : 106; and Ward, *Eng. Dramatic Lit.*, 2 : 520.

³ In *Works of Marston* (ed. A. H. Bullen), vol. 3. J. P. Collier professed to have seen a manuscript copy on which Marston's name was pencilled in a contemporary hand.

⁴ In *Works of Beaumont and Fletcher* (ed. A. R. Waller), vol. 4 (see especially iv. i, ii; v. ii). On date, see Ward, *Eng. Dramatic Lit.*, 2 : 734; and G. C. Macaulay in *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, 6 : 146.

⁵ J. Q. Adams, *Dramatic Records of Sir Henry Herbert*, 31. In Waller's *Beaumont and Fletcher*, vol. 6 (see especially II. i; III. i; IV. i; v. i). Fletcher's authorship (even in part) is doubtful. See G. C. Macaulay in *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, 6 : 149, 158.

⁶ In Waller's *Beaumont and Fletcher*, vol. 4 (see especially act v). On date, see Schelling, *Elizabethan Drama*, 2 : 207. The Prol. in the printed version (1647) was written for a revival after Fletcher's death, probably 1625 or 1626.

⁷ So Bullen (*Middleton*, 1 : lxxxvii) and Ward (*Eng. Dramatic Lit.*, 2 : 523). In Bullen's *Middleton*, vol. 5 (especially I. i. 91-93, 318-335; v. ii. 275-280).

effect, and are constantly so used. Their portraits are decidedly realistic: their originals were well known in Elizabethan life, and the copies follow the models closely. The vogue of the figures survived well into the Restoration. John Wilson, whom we have already noticed as concerned with themes of this kind, presents in the Mopus of his "Cheats" (1662) an impecunious astrologer and physician, and in the Sir Gudgeon Credulous of his "Projectors" (1664),¹ a projecting knight who is called a "star-gazer, quack, Chaldean," and the like.

Nor are women's parts, of nature similar to those just discussed, unrepresented. The Fat Woman of Brainford or Brentford, often referred to in "The Merry Wives" as a cunning woman, will be at once recalled, and the humiliation to which the Fat Knight was put in assuming her character. Finally, in Heywood's "Wise Woman of Hogsdon" (c. 1604)² we have a perfectly inimitable portrait of this familiar figure in Elizabethan life. Vulgar, resourceful, with dozens of trades, and with innumerable tricks up her sleeve, she nevertheless, through her vigorous if coarse humor, her abounding good nature, and her essential kindness, endears herself to the reader.

One favorite device of imposture has not so far received mention. It is a pretended possession by spirits, to imitate actual madness as it was conceived by the Elizabethans. The case of Edgar in "Lear," who was troubled by the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet, will at once be recalled, and the treatment of Malvolio in "Twelfth Night" (here the imposture is on the part of his tormentors). The motive was a favorite one with Jonson. There is a scene of possession in act v, scene viii, of "Volpone;" but it is in "The Devil Is an Ass" that he has used the motive most notably, in the elaborate counterfeit attack of Fitzdottrel.³ Middleton also used the motive. A pretended possession is mentioned in his "Game of Chess" (1624),⁴ and what seems a real one in his "Phoenix" (1607).⁵ A hit at the Catholic exorcisers may be seen in the efforts of the Irish priest, Tegue O'Divelly, in the Restoration Lancashire witch play, — Shadwell's, of 1681.⁶

The "haunted house" theme, previously noted in "The Bugbears," had, after the turn of the century, considerable popularity. It may be studied in Middleton's "Blurt, Master Constable" (pub. 1602),⁷ in

¹ Dramatic Works of John Wilson (ed. Jas. Maidment and W. H. Logan), 1874 (see especially pp. 23-25, 36, 39, 40, 48-50, 56-58, 71-74, 85-87, 221).

² In Dramatic Works of Thomas Heywood, vol. 5 (1874). On date, see Fleay, *Biog. Chron.*, I : 291.

³ v. iii, v. See a full discussion of this scene and its sources in G. L. Kittredge's paper, "King James I and the Devil Is an Ass" (*Mod. Philol.*, 9 [Oct., 1911] : 195-209).

⁴ Bullen's Middleton, vol. 7 (see especially iv. i; v. i).

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. I (see especially II. ii; v. ii).

⁶ See below, p. 484.

⁷ Bullen's Middleton, vol. I (see III. iii; II. ii, iii).

Ben Jonson's "Tale of a Tub,"¹ in Fletcher and Shirley's "Night Walker, or the Little Thief" (lic. 1634),² in Heywood's "Late Lancashire Witches,"³ and also in Shadwell's play.⁴ The motive persisted down to the beginning of the eighteenth century, when it was utilized in Addison's "Drummer" (1716).⁵

With all these lesser strands disposed of, we may finally approach the plays of witchcraft itself. Handled with anything like realism, this is a new motive in the drama. The non-extant 1597-98 group, "The Witch of Islington" and "Black Joan," has already been noted. In 1603 appeared Marston's "Sophonisba," in which, as Mr. Kittredge puts it, he presents Erictho in a scene which out-Lucans Lucan.⁶ In 1608, in Middleton's "Mad World, My Masters,"⁷ a real succubus figures, — not the counterfeit sort with which we are elsewhere familiar. The distinguished witchcraft scenes of "Macbeth" (1605-06?) need here only the recalling. In 1609 appeared Jonson's "Masque of Queens," with a demonology most full and erudite, compiled from the most diverse sources in the classics and witch-mongers.⁸ In 1615 was published "The Valiant Welshman," by "R. A.," which employs a very dignified and pompous witch, as well as her wizard son.⁹ Some time between 1614 and the thirties was composed Ben Jonson's beautiful fragmentary pastoral, "The Sad Shepherd."¹⁰ In this imaginative piece, the witch Maudlin, although poetically conceived, is endowed with most of the vulgar attributes of her kind. She transforms herself into a hare, curses in characteristic

¹ iv. v. Lic. 1633 (J. Q. Adams, *Dramatic Records of Sir Henry Herbert*, 19, 34), but probably a revision of a play written at a much earlier period, perhaps as early as 1601. See Cunningham-Gifford, *Jonson*, 1 : xv; Fleay, *Biog. Chron.*, 1 : 370; and Schelling, *Elizabethan Drama*, 1 : 326.

² In Waller's Beaumont and Fletcher, vol. 7 (see II. ii; III. iii; IV. i). Pr. in 1640 as Fletcher's. According to Herbert's license (1633), "corrected" by Shirley (J. Q. Adams, *Dramatic Records of Sir Henry Herbert*, 34). Original play put by Fleay as early as 1614 (*Biog. Chron.*, 1 : 197), by Oliphant, before 1610-11 (*Eng. Stud.*, xv. 350, 1891).

³ In act v (the haunted mill). See below, p. 484.

⁴ iv. i, iii; v.

⁵ "Works of Addison" in Bohn's Standard Library, vol. 5 (1891) (see especially I. i; II. i; IV. i; v. i). Pub. anonymously, 1716. See bibliographical note, p. liv, in *Selections from the Writings of Joseph Addison*, "Athenaeum Press Ser." (ed. B. Wendell and C. N. Greenough).

⁶ *Works* (ed. A. H. Bullen), vol. 2 (see IV. i. 99-125; and G. L. Kittredge, "English Witchcraft and James I" in *Toy Presentation Volume*, p. 45).

⁷ Bullen's Middleton, vol. 3 (see IV. i., 29-99; IV. iv. 17-62).

⁸ The sources being indicated by Jonson in learned notes.

⁹ See p. 452, footnote 1.

¹⁰ See W. W. Greg, who holds for a late date ("Ben Jonson's Sad Shepherd," in *Bang's Materialien z. Kunde d. altengl. Dramas*, 11 [1905] : xviii); and F. E. Schelling, who holds for an early date (*Elizabethan Drama*, 2 : 166-168).

fashion, and practises witchcraft for her own ends and to harm neighbors, —

“To make ewes cast their lambs, swine eat their farrow,
The housewives’ tun not work, nor the milk churn!
Writhe children’s wrists, and suck their breath in sleep,
Get vials of their blood! and where the sea
Casts up his slimy ooze, search for a weed
To open locks with, and to rivet charms.”¹

Clearly this is a highly realistic portrait to be introduced into a pastoral!

Continuing with the enumeration of plays, we may observe Dekker, Ford, and Rowley’s “Witch of Edmonton” (doubtless 1621²), based on the recent trial of Mother Sawyer,³ but handling the old hag, her temptation and submission to the Devil, her traffic with her dog-familiar, and all the hard facts of her life as a social outcast, with a sympathy unknown to the trials, and seldom found anywhere in the literature of the age. In 1623 was licensed “The Black Lady” (non-extant),⁴ which may have been a witch play. Some time in the twenties probably was written Middleton’s “Witch,” which, like Jonson’s “Masque of Queens,” gathers together a vast amount of devil-lore from the witch-mongers and others.⁵ In 1631 was printed Thomas May’s “Antigone,” which includes three hags who, when consulted by Creon, as the weird sisters are consulted by Macbeth, cause a corpse to prophesy.⁶

Two other important dramas may appropriately conclude the list. They are the two plays based on the witch trials in Lancashire. The first, shortly after the trials of 1633–34, and before the fate of the witches had been finally settled, came “hot off the press,” like a newspaper extra. This is “The Late Lancashire Witches” of Heywood and Brome.⁷ It contains witches’ revels, to which the apparently honest wife of a gentleman rides on a boy whom she has transformed

¹ II. ii.

² The date of Mother Sawyer’s trial and execution. In *Works of Thomas Dekker*, vol. 4 (1873).

³ See above, p. 470.

⁴ See J. Q. Adams, *Dramatic Records of Sir Henry Herbert*, 23; and Fleay, *Biog. Chron.*, 2 : 325.

⁵ In Bullen’s *Middleton*, vol. 5. Bullen dates toward the end of Middleton’s career (I : liii). *Middleton* d. 1627.

⁶ See Schelling’s *Elizabethan Drama*, 2 : 44, 45 (play not seen by the present writer).

⁷ In *Dramatic Works of Thomas Heywood*, vol. 4 (1874). Pub. 1634. The Epilogue shows the affair was not yet concluded: —

“Perhaps great mercy may,
After just condemnation give them day
Of longer life.”

into a horse, and from which she is herself ridden back, the boy having learned her charm. There are other changes of shape into hares, there are queer tricks played at a wedding feast, there is rough treatment of the soldier who guards the haunted mill, there is the identification of the gentleman's wife as a witch by means of a severed hand. In short, there are represented in this topical play most of the stories which were narrated at the trial on which it was based, and at others like it. The last play calling for pointed mention is Shadwell's revival of the "Lancashire Witch" story in 1681, with many additions and changes, the whole constituting the most composite as well as the most confused mass of witch-lore in our dramatic literature.¹ The drama is set in a comic key by the interpolated Irish priest and exorciser, Tegue O'Divelly.

Among these plays, two groups call for special comment. The first group may be said to exemplify "the mythology of witchcraft." In this group may be gathered "Sophonisba," "Macbeth," "The Masque of Queens," "The Witch," and perhaps others. In these dramas the traditional conceptions of the witch as handed down from the classics, from the treatises on witchcraft, and from the conventional features of popular superstition, have influenced the poet powerfully. His play may be a compendium of learning on these matters; or, if his treatment be freer, more artistic, at any rate he has had his eye very largely on these sources. There is nothing from recent cases or recent discussion, much less any attempt to present notorious figures.

The second group embraces the two Lancashire witch plays and "The Witch of Edmonton." They purport to give, in reportorial style, accounts of celebrated trials. Actual known incidents are introduced; although much may be changed, much added, and the whole coloring may be accordant to the author's attitude and purpose. Only in "The Witch of Edmonton," however, is there any emotional approach to the material. In the other plays the attitude is one of detachment, of impersonality. They are in the highest sense "realistic."

After this review of Elizabethan magic and witchcraft plays, the summary may be brief.

The public interest in the themes under consideration was continuous throughout the period usually called "Elizabethan" (1558-1642). The appearance and popularity of the themes in the drama are to be explained, not by any specific shifts in public interest, but by the history of dramatic vogue. The vogue of the fairy plays was strong in the 80's. They continued later, particularly because of their lyric and decorative qualities and ready adaptability to the

court masque. Plays containing magic of the romance type are few and incidental, occurring just as the romances or chronicles on which they were based contained such material. Folk-lore plays are even rarer, a few specimens standing quite isolated, apart from any vogue. The motive of the "practising magician," initiated by Marlowe, proved very attractive, and had a long and extended dramatic history. The "emissary to earth" plays were popular relatively late. Conjurers, wise women, and witches, when they appear early, are usually in characters borrowed from other literatures or from the chronicles; some approach toward realistic treatment is evident in the 1590's; there seems to be an irruption of more realistic plays in 1597-98; and thereafter the vogue of such plays is established, although the real "topical" play is extremely late in development. The vogue of all the plays considered seems to tally very well with trends in the development of the Elizabethan drama generally, particularly the development of realistic and satiric plays in the late 90's.¹

¹ In view of the persistent attacks on King James I as a violent and bigoted persecutor of witches, and the spirited defence of the monarch's record by G. L. Kittredge ("English Witchcraft and James I," in *Studies in the History of Religions*, presented to C. H. Toy, 1912), the evidence of this study should be brought to bear. Nothing has shown any special intensity of persecution in the reign of James I, nor any special intervention by the King. The development of the dramatic *genres* serves well enough to explain the various types of witchcraft plays when they appear.